

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4666

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR,IT

SUBJ: CIVAIR: GOI THREAT TO PAN AM FLIGHTS BEYOND ROME

REF: (A) STATE 191605; (B) ROME 13937; (C) ROME 14013;
(D) CALINGAERT/RILEY TELCON

SUMMARY. GOI AIRPORT OFFICIALS ESCALATED CONFRONTATION WITH PAA AUGUST 3 BY INITIALLY REFUSING TO CLEAR PAA EASTBOUND FLIGHT TO ISTANBUL FOR TAKE-OFF. PAA WAS CARRYING APPROXIMATELY 380 EASTBOUND PASSENGERS INCLUDING THOSE BOARDING IN NY. ECMIN INTERCEDED ON PAA BEHALF WITH SENIOR CIVILAVIA OFFICIALS BY RESTATING US POSITION AND EMPHASIZING UNDERSTANDING REACHED OVER WEEKEND AND ON MONDAY MEETING (REFTELS (B) AND (C)). CIVILAVIA RECONSIDERED ITS POSITION AND CLEARED FLIGHT FOR TAKE-OFF. EMBASSY THEN SUBMITTED NOTE ALONG LINE (REFTEL (A)) TO MFA (PIETROSANTO). HOWEVER, ISSUE NOT RESOLVED. CIVILAVIA APPEARS UNWILLING TO PERMIT PAA EASTBOUND FLIGHTS TO CONTINUE WITH OVER 180 PASSENGERS INCLUDING TRANSIT. END SUMMARY.

1. PAA LOCAL REP. GUZZARDO EARLY THIS MORNING ADVISED EMBASSY THAT ROME FIUMICINO AIRPORT OFFICIALS REFUSED TO CLEAR PAA FLIGHTCARRYING 380 EASTBOUND PASSENGERS FOR TAKE-OFF. SUCH ACTION WAS CLEARLY CONTRARY TO UNDERSTANDING REACHED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MONDAY MORNING MEETING WITH SENIOR CIVILAVIA OFFICIALS (REFTEL (C)). AND EARLIER DISCUSSIONS OVER THE WEEKEND (REFTEL (B)). ECMIN THEN CALLED CIVILAVIA OFFICIAL CINA WHO AGREED TO PERMIT PASS FLIGHT TO TAKE-OFF IN VIEW OF "EMERGENCY" (IMPENDING 12 HOUR AIRPORT STRIKE). SUBSEQUENT TO THIS CONVERSATION, EMBOFF CARRIED NOTE VERBALE (REFTEL (A)) TO MFA OFFICIAL PIETROSANTO, STRONGLY RE-

ITERATED U.S. POSITION AND URGED THAT MFA PRESS CIVILAVIA
TO CEASE INTERFERING WITH PAN AM FLIGHTS.

2. BASIS FOR DISAGREEMENT REMAINS ESSENTIALLY SAME AS
REPORTED REFTEL (C) AND CONVEYED IN CALINGAERT/RILEY TELCON
AUGUST 3. CIVILAVIA SEEMS TO HAVE CONCEDED TO U.S. THAT
BASIS FOR LIMIT ON NUMBER OF PASSENGERS IS A 707 ALL/ECONOMY
CLASS CONFIGURATION, I.E. BETWEEN 180 AND 185 PASSENGERS.
MAJOR ISSUES OF DISPUTE REMAIN (A) DOES PASSENGER LIMIT
APPLY ON A FLIGHT-BY-FLIGHT BASIS OR AS AN AVERAGE-PER-FLIGHT
BASIS OVER THE ENTIRE SUMMER SEASON, AND (B) WHAT PASSENGERS
ARE INCLUDED IN THE FIFTH FREEDOM PASSENGER DEFINITION--
ITALIAN POSITION HOLDS THAT FIFTH FREEDOM PASSENGERS IN-
CLUDE ALL PASSENGERS, IN TRANSIT THROUGH OR TICKETED IN
ROME BOUND FOR A FIFTH FREEDOM DESTINATION.

3. MFA OFFICIAL PIETROSANTO PROMISED RESPONSE TO EMBASSY NOTE
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, GIVEN SEEMINGLY HARDENING OF
POSITION BY ITALIAN AUTHORITIES, INTERFERENCE WITH CLEARING
FLIGHTS FOR TAKE-OFF WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE. PAA EASTBOUND
FLIGHTS WILL BOARD OVER 180 PASSENGERS PER FLIGHT IN ROME ON
FIVE OUT OF THE NEXT EIGHT DAYS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE REBUTTAL
ARGUMENTS WHICH WOULD PROVE HELPFUL IN RESPONDING TO
ITALIAN AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO ISSUES
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RAISED IN REFTEL (C). ALSO PER REF TELCON (D), EMBASSY WOULD
WELCOME ANY WASHINGTON APPROACHES TO ITALIAN EMBASSY WHICH
WOULD REINFORCE U.S. POSITION. HOLMES

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